

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 2645

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, AG

SUBJ: PREPARATIONS FOR VIP GROUP VISITS TO ALGIERS

1. OWING TO EXCEPTIONAL LAST MINUTE EFFORTS ON PART OF EMBASSY STAFF AND UNDERSTANDING FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, NAM MISSION VISIT TO ALGERIA WENT WELL. WE WISH DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND COMMERCE TO BE AWARE, HOWEVER, OF SHORTCOMINGS IN PREPARATIONS FOR THIS VISIT WHICH COULD BE AVOIDED IN FUTURE.

2. FIRST, NAM GROUP ACQUIRED EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT TO EXPECT HERE FROM ALGERIAN REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON. VISIT, PARTIALLY ORGAZIZED THROUGH ALGERIAN EMBASSY AND BOUSSELHAM, LED NAM TO BELIEVE ALGERIANS WOULD ROLL OUT RED CARPET, INCLUDING MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE, MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND ENERGY ABDESSELAM AND OTHERS. IN POINT OF FACT, APPEARS BOUSSELHAM DID NOTHING BECAUSE OF HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH TRANSFER TO ABIDJAN AND AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, NEITHER PRESIDENCY NOR FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS EVEN INFORMED BY HIM OF PROPOSED NAM VISIT. FURTHERMORE, ABDESSELAM WAS AWAY ON VISIT TO FRANCE AT TIME OF VISIT AND WAS NOT AVAILABLE.

3. IT IS ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE FOR BUSINESS VIP'S INTERESTED IN ALGERIA TO CALL ON ALGERIAN REPS, BUT THEY SHOULD BE CAUTIONED THAT PROMISES OFTEN EXCEED PERFORMANCE AND THAT METICULOUS FOLLOW-UP IS REQUIRED.

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FORMER AMBASSADOR CHERIF GUELLAL, WHO IS NOW SONATRACH'S

REPRESENTATIVE IN WASHINGTON AS WELL AS MINISTER ABDESLAM'S
CONFIDENT, USUALLY PERFORMS BETTER
THAN ALGERIAN EMBASSY, BUT HE TOO IS PRONE TO PROMISE TOO
READILY THINGS HE HAS NO INTENTION OF DOING. ALSO
SINCE GUELLAL HAS A PRIVATE PRACTICE ASSISTING FIRMS
TO DO BUSINESS IN ALGERIA, THE USG HAS TO BE VERY
CAUTIOUS IN ITS DEALINGS OR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
DEALING WITH GUELLAL.

4. SECOND SHORTCOMING WAS THAT NAM MISSION ADVANCE
MAN PLANNED TO MAKE ALL ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISIT DURING
A ONE-DAY SUNDAY STOPOVER IN ALGIERS THINKING THE
SABBATH HERE WAS OBSERVED ON FRIDAY. NOT SURPRISINGLY,
NO ALGERIAN OF IMPORTANCE WAS ABLE TO SEE HIM ON THIS
HOLIDAY AND HE LEFT WITH NINETY PERCENT OF PREPARATIONS
STILL UNDONE. IT TAKES TIME TO ARRANGE THINGS IN
ALGIERS AND VISIT ORGANIZERS SHOULD BE ADVISED TO ALLOW
TWO TO THREE WORKING DAYS TO SET VISITS UP.
THE ADVANCE VISIT ITSELF IS STRONGLY TO BE RECOMMENDED
AS MEETINGS AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS ARRANGED BY MAIL
CANNOT BE COUNTED ON. IN PARTICULAR, STEADY DIET OF
HIGH LEVEL GATHERINGS AND SERIOUS HOTEL ROOM SHORTAGE
MAKES IT ESSENTIAL THAT HOTEL RESERVATIONS BE TIED
DOWN FIRMLY. NO REPEAT NO TRAVEL AGENCY OR ALGERIAN
EMBASSY CAN BE RELIED UPON TO DO THIS. WE WILL BE
GLAD TO CHECK IF GIVEN SUFFICIENT ADVANCE NOTICE.

5. FINALLY, WITH REGARD TO NAM MISSION, IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN HELPFUL IF EMBASSY COULD HAVE BEEN BROUGHT
INTO PLANNING SOONER.

5. WE HAVE ALREADY SUGGESTED TO ALGERIANS NEED FOR
CAREFUL ADVANCE PLANNING IN CONNECTION WITH MINISTRY
OF INDUSTRY AND ENERGY ABDESSELAM'S PROPOSED TWO TO
THREE WEEK VISIT TO US IN FEBRUARY OR MARCH. I HOPE
DISCUSS WITH CASTEL OF INDUSTRY AND ENERGY NEXT WEEK. PARKER

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